



CITY of
Waterville
MAINE

Proclamation

FOR ATTENDANCE AWARENESS MONTH

- Whereas** good attendance is essential to student achievement and graduation, and we are committed to dedicating our resources and attention to reducing chronic absenteeism rates, with a focus starting as early as preschool; and
- Whereas** chronic absence – missing 10 percent or more of school for any reason including excused and unexcused absences, or just two of three days a month – is a proven predictor of academic trouble and dropout rates; and
- Whereas** improving attendance and reducing chronic absence takes commitment, collaboration and tailored approaches to particular challenges and strengths in each community; and
- Whereas** chronic absence predicts lower third-grade reading proficiency, course failure and eventual dropout, it weakens our communities and our local economy; and
- Whereas** the impact of chronic absence hits low-income students and children of color particularly hard if they don't have the resources to make up for lost time in the classroom and are more likely to face systemic barriers to getting to school – such as unreliable transportation, lack of access to health care, unstable or unaffordable housing; and
- Whereas** chronic absence exacerbates the achievement gap that separates low-income students from their peers, since students from low-income families are both more likely to be chronically absent and more likely to be affected academically by missing school. Absenteeism also undermines efforts to improve struggling schools, since it's hard to measure improvement in classroom instruction if students are not in class to benefit from them; and
- Whereas** schools and community partners can reach out more frequently to absent students to determine why they are missing school and what would help them attend more regularly; and
- Whereas** all students – even those who show up regularly – are affected by chronic absence because teachers must spend time reviewing for students who missed lessons; and
- Whereas** chronic absence can be significantly reduced when schools, parents and communities work together to monitor and promote good attendance and address hurdles that keep children from getting to school,

Now therefore, I, Karen Heck, Mayor of Waterville, do hereby proclaim our City
will stand with the nation in recognizing September as:

ATTENDANCE AWARENESS MONTH

We hereby commit to focusing on reducing chronic absenteeism to give all children an equitable opportunity to learn, grow and thrive academically, emotional and socially.

We are going to work to do this by raising public awareness and concern about the toxic impact of chronic absence and by encouraging broad community engagement and sustained civic action to help parents get their children to school every day.

Our goal is to have all Waterville children reading at grade level by the end of 3rd grade and I encourage all Waterville residents to find out how they can help us achieve that goal.

In Witness Whereof, I do hereby set my hands and seal this
16th day of September, two thousand and fourteen.


Karen Heck, Mayor